

REPORT

— OF THE —

Superintending School Committee

— OF THE —

TOWN OF LEE, N. H.,

For The Year Ending March 12, 1877.



DOVER, N. H.:
STATE PRESS STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT.
1877.

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REPORT

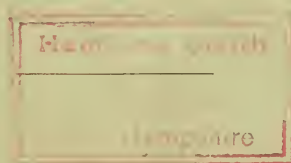
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REPORT.

In their annual report to the town the School Committee ought, perhaps, to say but little beyond that which is necessary to show, in their true light, the standing of the schools in the individual districts. There are some subjects, however, to which they wish to refer as demanding a little consideration at *some* proper time, and why not at the present? We believe the more searching the report the more good it will do, if it does any good at all. We believe that every blow, properly directed, starts a spark that may kindle into a light.

There are some people who do not value a school report, do not care for it, and only view it as a tax upon the treasury. We would give all credit to their honesty, though we are not convinced of their wisdom. There are others, however, who think differently,—quite a large share of the residents of Lee, we judge, from the eagerness with which they seek after a copy of the report when distributed. They see in the increasing spirit of the teacher, and the awakening heart of the parent, a gradual lifting of the cloud and the advancing of the sunlight.

There is a good which cannot be estimated in dollars and cents. Some one has said, and fitly, too,—“There is a good

higher and holier than the dumb treasury ; a life that lives in our thoughts and aspirations, and which clings not wholly to the clods at our feet." To that good be these annual reports some humble tributary. In that hope we give our pen again to its duty. Let it find charity with the generous, faith in the hearts of the thoughtful, and a welcome at the children's home !

And first, the Committee are happy to say that in most of our schools there has been a manifest improvement during the past year, both in discipline and general culture. In a few schools, however, there still exists a sad lack in this respect. There is an evident want of that better spirit that raises the school to a higher life. It is the opinion of the Committee that few reforms will add more to the value of our schools, than that which might be brought about by a union of efforts, both on the part of teacher and parents, to drive out that school-room plague, "whispering." Why should it be tolerated ? We are of the opinion that a determined, inveterate whisperer, who declines prompt and positive reformation, should be forthwith expelled from the school-room. None but a teacher who has suffered from his presence knows what an abomination that presence is, or how sadly it clogs all the better movements of the school-room. We say let there be no faltering in "bruising the serpent's head."

Another reform, which we consider of no mean importance, to which we would call the attention of parents, is the lack of dictionaries for the use of our scholars. A diligent search has not discovered the shadow of a dictionary for the benefit of a school in the whole town. Its value has not yet been fully appreciated. There are many advanced scholars greatly in need of such an assistant. A suitable work of the kind can be obtained at trifling expense, within the means of almost every one. We would not only ask the consideration of parents on this subject, but also that

teachers make it a point to understand their duty in enabling their pupils to derive the proper benefit from it. I state with pleasure that the scholars in No. 4, under the leadership of their very efficient teacher of the winter term, Miss. Annie E. Gile, have, by giving a concert after the close of the term, been able to raise a sufficient sum to purchase the much needed assistant. It is to be hoped that other districts will adopt the same plan, or some more expeditious one, to procure the much needed help. And now as to

TEXT BOOKS.

Our teachers are still annoyed, our schools are still in confusion, a great deal of time is still wasted, parents are still subjected to unnecessary expense on account of the great diversity of text books, even in the same school-room. There is a remedy, and that remedy will add very much to the usefulness of our schools. Labor in the school-room could be performed with less annoyance and with greater efficiency. The remedy for the difficulty is provided for by a law giving power to the Committee to regulate the thing to suit his own notions; and a change of committee men changes notions, also. Now we submit if it would not be better for all concerned if the town should take action on this matter, and establish a uniformity of text books, to be procured by competent persons, and to continue them at least five years, as the law now provides. We deem this reform one of pressing necessity, and urge it upon the attention of our fellow citizens.

As a copy of this report is to be sent to each teacher whose services we have had during the last school year, we cannot refrain from addressing a few remarks directly to them. It may seem rather impertinent than pertinent; we venture it, however, as a thought gathered from our best observation and experience, and from a sincere desire to see our young educators fitly qualified for their duties. We al-

lude to the very little interest which many of our teachers manifest in their study of educational works and educational journals. Let us say a word here, because we think it ought to be said :

Teachers proffer their services to the community ; they ought to be qualified—as well qualified as circumstances will permit—they ought to be well prepared to meet the demands where they labor ; they ought to make use of the best means within their power to effect their own competency. But is it thus ? In looking around among our teachers we have been surprised to find so few, so very few, who ever read or patronized an educational work of any kind. It is the indifferent spirit manifested in this matter that we deplore, indicating as it does, a lack of life in the good work. We have plenty of journals of education, published in New Hampshire and elsewhere, which profess to aid teachers in the better understanding of their duties—which aim to give them useful hints and suggestions which shall make them more profitable servants to their employers, while giving at the same time dignity and solidity to the teacher's character. Such a journal, if it is what it professes to be, ought to be in the hands of every teacher. Its spirit should be incorporated into his spirit. He should gather inspiration from its pages for his noble duty, and the man or the woman who can draw no life, no encouragement, no inspiring thought from such a journal—from such a communion with more mature minds—is certainly not the best person to assist the expansion of the budding intellect of youth. We think a good teacher is known by his efforts to make himself such.

The vilest politician drinks in his weekly or daily nourishment from the press ; fires up his spirit by contact with kindred spirits, and actually lives in an atmosphere charged with the very inspiration he needs to impell him to earnest and perpetual struggle.

He is "booked," active, wide-awake and ready for combat. Be this right or wrong, no matter; it proves his wisdom in adapting means to end. The politician is not a fool, whatever rogue he may be. Now then, I submit it to your consideration,—is not he wiser than the teacher? We mean wiser than that teacher who welcomes to his closet no inspiring breath from the press, and cares not for the cause in which he professedly labors? Our teachers should keep their eyes, ears and hearts open to the light and all the educational advantages around them. We have insisted, we still insist, that our teachers be well paid. We insist, too, with the same earnestness, that teachers give some evidence, by their life, spirit and conversation, that they be worth the pay. And we insist, furthermore, that the teacher who means to be worth anything, is certainly worth the more to any school if he or she be a hearty and earnest reader of some educational journal. We submit the assertion to any wise man's scrutiny.

Next in order comes the report of the individual schools. If we fail to state the truth in this connection, it will be an error of the "head and not of the heart." For such you will of course cheerfully grant pardon:

DISTRICT NO. 1—TURNPIKE.

SUMMER TERM, 10 weeks; average attendance, 23 14-25; number of scholars 28; tardy, 3; dismissals, 0; wages of teacher per month, including board, \$28; Miss Martha A. Lane, of Lee, teacher.

From Miss Lane's previous experience in teaching we had reason to expect that good success would attend her efforts, and in this respect we are pleased to say we are not disappointed. Her pupils respected her for her amiable qualities, and good order was preserved without recourse to coercive measures. The improvement was good in the studies pursued.

WINTER TERM, 16 weeks ; number of scholars, 40 ; average attendance, 24 ; tardy, 77 ; dismissals, 12 ; Mr. Arthur B. Adams of St. Louis, Mo., teacher ; wages per month, including board, \$32.

Mr. A. here made his first attempt at country school teaching, and from the appearance of the school at our final visit, we should judge that the term had been a successful one. The classes in reading, geography and arithmetic passed a very good examination. There are some very great disadvantages to the fullest success in this district, among which are the unfitness of the school-house for a winter term of school, and the habitual inclination of scholars to be absent and tardy.

JOHN W. HILL, Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 2—MAST ROAD.

SUMMER TERM, 6 weeks ; number of scholars, 16 ; average attendance, 14 8-15 ; tardy, 0 ; dismissed, 1 ; Miss Nellie Caverno, of Lee, teacher ; wages of teacher, including board, \$24.

We were gratified with the appearance of this school at our several visits. Although it was Miss Caverno's first effort at school teaching, she being a resident of the district, also, the order and discipline of the school were good, and the scholars made good progress while under her care.

WINTER TERM, 12 weeks ; number of scholars, 21 ; average attendance, 17 14-15 ; tardy, 23 ; dismissals, 8 ; Mr. Willie E. Batchelder, of Nottingham, teacher ; wages of teacher, including board, \$26.

This was Mr. B.'s first effort at teaching, yet he appeared to possess in an eminent degree these two great requisites of a good teacher, viz.: judgment as to how to apply his labors for the promotion of the best interests of scholars under his charge, and a disposition not to evade the duties imposed by his high vocation. Consequently the appearance of the school, at its close, was very pleasing to the Committee.

CHARLES E. THOMPSON,
Prudential Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 3—WEDNESDAY HILL.

FALL AND WINTER TERM, 9 weeks ; number of scholars, 5 ; tardy, 10 ; dismissals, 16 ; Miss Annie A. Butler, of South Berwick, teacher ; wages of teacher, including board, \$28.

This was the commencement of Miss Butler's efforts at school teaching, yet she succeeded very well in her new business. The readiness with which her classes recited showed that her pupils had made considerable improvement during the term.

WILLIAM A. JENKINS,
Prudential Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 4—HILL.

SUMMER TERM, 8 weeks ; number of scholars, 21 ; average attendance, 17 ; tardy, 7 ; dismissals, 0 ; Miss Mary V. Jenkins, of Lee, teacher ; wages of teacher, including board, \$30.

Miss J's experience in teaching, and her previous success, are too well known to need comment here. Suffice it to say that she did nothing to mar her previous fair report, and that her efforts were beneficial to the scholars under her charge.

WINTER TERM, 12 weeks ; number of scholars, 31 ; tardy, 36 ; dismissed, 10 ; average attendance, 28 4-5 ; Miss Annie E. Gile, of Nottingham, teacher ; wages of teacher, including board, \$36.

We can render no better tribute of praise to the earnest, honest efforts of the members of this school, than that given by the teacher's remarks in her register, which we insert in full, with pleasure, viz.: "Notwithstanding the severity of the weather during this term, the attendance has been more regular than might have been expected ; particularly from many of the small children. The greater part of the scholars have taken great interest in their studies, and in the school ; and by their diligence and correct deportment have succeeded in making the term a pleasant one to their teacher." The names of those not absent one-half day are—Mary A. Buzzell, Francena Jones, Nellie E. Plummer,

Ada M. Critcherson, Susie E. Buzzell, Fred P. Comings, Charles Manning, Edwin C. Thompson, Earnest S. Comings, Edwin J. Thompson, Granville B. Thompson, Willie F. Critcherson, Frank C. Ryan and Willie H. Thompson.

ISRAEL S. DAME,
Prudential Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 5—HOOK.

SUMMER AND FALL TERM, 15 1-2 weeks ; number of scholars, 32 ; average attendance, 28 ; tardy, 58 ; dismissals, 50 ; Miss Emma C. Hobbs, of Deerfield, teacher ; wages of teacher, including board, \$30.

Here again we find a teacher of experience, demonstrating the truth of the saying that "experience is the best teacher." The general footing up of work done here during the term was very commendable, still giving this school the honor of being the bearer away of the palm from every rival. And here let me repeat a word that has so often been said :—first, to parents, be ever watchful for the interests of your schools ; second, to prudential committees, be sure to select your teachers early, and for your best schools accept none but those of well established reputation.

JEREMIAH RANDALL,
Prudential Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 6—WADLEY'S FALLS.

SUMMER TERM, 8 weeks ; number of scholars, 28 ; average attendance, 23 13-80 ; tardy, 17 ; dismissed, 0 ; Miss Annie Leighton Bennett, of Newmarket, teacher ; wages of teacher, including board, \$30.

This is a field in which Miss B. has quite successfully labored before, and we have yet to learn that her services were not considered very acceptable. The Committee did not visit this school but once during the term, owing to the non-receipt of information in regard to the time of its close ; yet we have no reason to doubt but that the work was well done.

WINTER TERM, 12 weeks ; number of scholars, 33 ; average attendance, 26 ; tardy, 65 ; dismissed, 24 ; Mr. George W.

Prescott, Jr., of Kingston, teacher ; wages of teacher, including board, \$39.

It fills the Committee with deep regret to be forced by duty to state that one point of difference in opinion existed between the teacher and Committee, in regard to the discipline of this school. Believing good order to be a point of primary importance, the office of the teacher is not only to impart instruction, but to maintain such order that the well disposed can pursue their studies without interruption ; and if need be, to enforce and insure application. Mr. P. passed a very excellent examination as to scholarship, and we think his short-comings at this point were the only hindrance to very excellent success.

ISAIAH D. EDGERLY,
Prudential Committee.

DISTRICT NO. 7—NORTH RIVER.

SUMMER TERM, 9 weeks ; number of scholars, 18 ; average attendance, 16 2-9 ; tardy, 11 ; dismissals, 1 ; wages of teacher, including board, \$28 ; Miss Ora N. Scales, of Nottingham, teacher.

Miss Scales is a teacher of long experience ; calm and dignified in her manners in the school-room, making no attempt at outside show, but seeking to reach the inward springs of reason and judgment, and to instill into the minds of her pupils such lessons as will tend to qualify them for the duties of life ; and at the close of her services in the district it was evident that a good work had been done.

WINTER TERM, 12 3-5 weeks ; number of scholars, 16 ; average attendance, 14 ; tardy, 14 ; dismissed, 0 ; wages of teacher, including board, \$30.

The first 5 3-5 weeks were taught by the teacher of the summer term, with equally as good success, but owing to ill health she was forced to leave, and was succeeded by Miss Clara A. Harvey, of Nottingham. Owing to the blocked condition of the roads at the close of the school the Committee was unable to be present, but judging from the condition of the school at the first, there can be no doubt of marked success.

FRANK HALY,
Prudential Committee.

In the foregoing report, we have, according to our ability, given the facts in the case. We have endeavored at all times to impress upon the minds of the scholars the value of their time ; the importance of forming correct habits of study and action ; of so acting in their youth that they may be known as the good, truthful, obedient and honest boy or girl, and an appreciation of their duties both present and prospective. We have endeavored to impress upon the minds of both teachers and scholars the necessity of keeping the school-house as a study room, and not as a play-house. In a word, we have done what we could for the promotion of the best interests of all concerned with the trust we have held ; and in conclusion we request that you will consider well the important subjects at which we have imperfectly hinted, to the end that our school-money may not be wasted or misapplied, and that the town may maintain its just pride in the prosperity and usefulness of its schools and the intelligence of its people.

Respectfully submitted,

HOSEA B. SNELL,

Superintending School Committee of Lee.

